



Flathead Conservation District  
133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT 59901  
www.flatheadcd.org 406-752-4220

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### **CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE**

Chair Ronald Buentemeier called the June 25, 2018, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

### **Board members present:**

Ronald Buentemeier, Chairman; Pete Woll, Vice Chairman; Dean Sirucek, Secretary/Treasurer; John Ellis, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; Lori Curtis, Supervisor, being a quorum of the Board.

**Board members absent:** Mark Siderius, Supervisor. Absence is excused.

Also in attendance were: Valerie Kurth, Hailey Graf and Ginger Kauffman, FCD staff; Dan Brosten; Brian Morchen; Samantha Tappenbeck, Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM); Mara Lorch; Amy McCormmach-Harvey.

Pete Woll introduced Dan Brosten, who may be interested in becoming an Associate Supervisor or a Supervisor in the future.

### **MINUTES**

Lori Curtis motioned "to approve the minutes of the June 11, 310-Stream Permit meeting as presented." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Email: Reminder from FWP for anglers to clean, drain & dry watercraft, trailers, waders and equipment to help prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species. For more information on invasive mussels and locations of inspection and decontamination stations, visit [cleandraindrymt.com](http://cleandraindrymt.com) or call 406-444-2440.
2. Email: 2018 Supervisor Summit, August 28-30, Radisson Colonial Hotel, Helena. For Hotel reservations call the hotel at 406-443-2100. Rooms are under *Lewis & Clark Conservation District Supervisor Summit*. Cut off for room block is July 29. For Summit agenda contact LaVerne Ivie 406-247-4420 [livie@mt.gov](mailto:livie@mt.gov), for registration information contact Chris Evans 406-449-5000, Ext. 112, [lccd@mt.net](mailto:lccd@mt.net)
3. Email: River Rendezvous, July 12, 2018, in Great Falls, MT. This year's Rendezvous will focus on infrastructure and how that affects riparian health, habitat, management, tourism, industry and more. Cost is \$35.00. Contact Tenlee G. Atchison, Cascade Conservation District, 406.770.4308, [www.cascadecd.com](http://www.cascadecd.com)
4. National Association of Conservation Districts publications:



- NACD eResource, Conservation Clips, Forestry Notes* <http://www.nacdnet.org>
5. Email: Gallatin CD newsletter *Conservation Journal* <http://www.gallatincd.org>
  6. Email: Glacier County CD is hosting a Launch Party for the Women in Ag book *Montana Women From the Ground Up*, with a BBQ on Wednesday, June 27, 5:00 – 7:00 P.M., Cut Bank City Park (on Main Street). Contact Tabitha Furnare, 406-873-4292 Ext 101 [Glaciercountycd@gmail.com](mailto:Glaciercountycd@gmail.com)
  7. Email: Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM) *The Montana Conservationist* – news from Montana’s Conservation Districts [www.swcdm.org](http://www.swcdm.org)
  8. Email: Letter from Mark Suta, MAC President. MACD has hired Dan McGowan as the new MACD Executive Director
  9. Email: Whitefish Planning Board meeting, June 21, 2018, 6:00 P.M., Whitefish City Council Chambers, 418 E 2nd Street, Whitefish, Montana. <http://www.cityofwhitefish.org>
  10. Thank-you card from college scholarship recipient Kathleen Foley-Helton.
  11. Email: Job announcement: The Montana Rangelands Partnership, a collaborative public-private partnership among numerous agricultural and conservation organizations in Montana, is seeking a full-time Range Technician position to conduct range planning and monitoring activities related to the Partnership. Applications due June 29.  
Job announcement and how to apply at: [www.swcdm.org/hiring](http://www.swcdm.org/hiring)

#### **FINANCIAL**

The following bills were reviewed:

1. CenturyLink \$267.09
2. Flathead Valley Community College \$2000.00
3. MACO \$4000.00
4. RESPEC \$23,570.86
5. University of Montana \$2000.00
6. VISA \$751.89

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the bills as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one was in attendance to comment on items not on the agenda.

**College Scholarship Recipient:** Mara Lorch thanked the board for the college scholarship and noted she is very grateful for the financial help. She will attend MSU Bozeman this fall to major in conservation biology and ecology.



### **310's**

**Jacobson**, FL2018023C, Whale Creek, complaint: Ronald Buentemeier explained that during the last 310-meeting an onsite inspection was scheduled as it was close to another property where a different onsite was also scheduled. However, a motion to send the standard complaint letter was supposed to be made first. A phone poll was then done so the letter could be sent in a timely manner. Lori Curtis motioned "to approve the phone poll to send the standard complaint letter to the landowner." Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Boyd**, FL2017053C, Nine Mile Creek, complaint & **Pheifer Trust**, FL2017057C, Nine Mile Creek, complaint: Brian Morchen explained he had received a copy of the letter stating that the complaints he filed were determined not to be 310 violations, and he wanted to submit additional information (photos) showing it is a violation. He explained that he had submitted the complaints last fall based on his observations. His property is about ¼ of a mile downstream from the complaint, and, in September, he noticed the creek had dried up. Then, in October, his well dried up. In the previous year, the same thing happened, and water returned in the spring. In October of 2017, he hiked up the creek and found the obstruction that provoked his complaint. He described cord wood pieces, about 2 feet long and 10 inches diameter, stacked to a height of 3-4 feet in the creek. A plastic tarp was wrapped around them. He thought the material had been there for several years and was constructed by a person, not beavers.

Mr. Morchen went on to explain how the onsite inspection was not done until this spring, when high water conditions precluded inspectors from being able to see the whole dam. He said that someone had cleaned up the site between October and May by removing the plastic and placing old brush on top of the dam. His original photos included lumber and a pallet. He alleged someone built the dam and tried to hide it knowing an inspection was coming, but they had made a conscious effort to stop the flow. Mr. Morchen explained that when he confronted Mr. Boyd, the latter denied doing anything. He added he did not agree with the Board's decision and asked for a follow up. Ronald Buentemeier explained the district administers Montana's Natural Streambed & Land Preservation Act and does not have authority over water rights. Mr. Morchen responded that although his well situation started his investigation, the dam is man-made and impeding the water flow. Dean Sirucek asked Mr. Morchen how deep his well is. Morchen stated 60' with water rights since 1964. Dean said the wood had been in place a long time, possibly decades. There was a major flush 2 years ago, and deposits can change the flows by sealing up a groundwater seam. Mr. Morchen repeated that he was not arguing the well, just the dam. Dean again said the wood has been there for a significant time, it may have been built without a water right. Lori Curtis stated if it was done in the 60's we cannot hold them accountable. Ronald stated that we did the onsite inspection in the spring, and the landowners were both present. We have a process to follow and we document our inspections with photos. Ronald stated we will contact legal counsel and let you know. Mr. Morchen thanked the board for their time and said he is not just a disgruntled landowner downstream with a well that goes dry in the fall; he would like to see the stream flowing again. John Ellis gave him a copy of the Adopted Rules.

Ronald asked Valerie Kurth to set up a meeting with the county attorney.



## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Cost-Share Program:** Valerie Kurth reported that six applications were received, and she gave the board an application request summary to help facilitate review. One landowner withdrew after the site inspection, and two will be discussed at other meetings, so only three will be considered right now. Pete Woll asked about the cost-share budget. Valerie explained any approved applications would be funded under the 2018/2019 fiscal year budget, which has not yet been set. Valerie proposed budgeting the same amount as the current fiscal year, and added that once applications are approved contracts can be drawn up.

**McCormmach-Harvey:** Valerie stated that Amy McCormmach-Harvey had participated in the Small Acreage Landowner Workshop. Amy explained she and her husband would like to initiate several livestock management practices. They purchased 10 acres of property that had weeds and sandy soil. The purpose is to put horses on it, but they know that it is a fragile piece of property and want to make sure not to do additional damage. They have already seeded one acre of grass and will need to do some re-grading due to water issues. Some weed management has been done. The plan is to reseed and implement some sacrifice lots. Valerie stated the request is only for materials because Amy and her husband will do all the work themselves. The total cost is \$3487.50. Dean Sirucek stated that the initial reseeded areas are coming back but it will take time due to the sandy soil conditions. He added that the proposal makes good conservation sense and he fully supported the proposal. Pete Woll motioned “the Flathead CD approve the cost-share application for McCormmach-Harvey in the amount of \$3487.50.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**McFarland:** Valerie explained the property is along Trumbull Creek. The application is for windbreak and riparian buffer enhancement. Wind comes from the north in the winter and snow drifts pile up next to the house. Ronald Buentemeier and Valerie suggested using several rows of caragana for the windbreak, and planting riparian shrubs and tree seedlings. Browse protection is also included in the application. The landowner will prep the site for the caragana and do the installation. Valerie added that the seedlings will come from the DNRC seedling nursery. Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the McFarland cost-share application in the amount of \$288.75.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Vissotzky:** Valerie explained the application is for weed control and re-seeding on 10.5 forested acres near Olney. The weeds, mainly knapweed and hawkweed, are excessive, especially in the open areas and along trails. The contractor could use an ATV in the open areas and do spot spraying in the wooded areas. Two applications are proposed (fall 2018 and spring 2019). NRCS has recommended herbicides for their property. Because the open areas and trail are so overgrown with hawkweed, Valerie and Dean Sirucek suggested the landowner budget for approximately 3 acres of re-seeding (native grass and red clover). Ronald Buentemeier added that the red clover will out-compete the knapweed. Valerie noted that there is no livestock. Dean stated they are trying to do some really good management and stay ahead of the situation. Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the Vissotzky cost-share application in the amount of \$2230.11 as presented.” Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



**Pollinator Outreach:** Valerie Kurth explained that the district Workplan included implementation of Pollinator Programs/Projects, so she asked Hailey Graf to explore potential projects that the district could do. Hailey reported she contacted Lake CD as they have a pollinator program and she did not want to reinvent the wheel. She also looked into developing a native pollinator seed mix. Hailey learned there are already native pollinator seed mixes commercially available in the Flathead. She looked at other options and came up with two ideas for possible Pollinator Programs and ways to fill the pollinator information gap. Hailey noted she is not proposing anything specific at this time, but just wanted feedback from the board.

Workshops: There are several nurseries and garden centers in the valley that have established workshops for the public. They have expressed interest in information on pollinators from the district and/or including someone from the district as a guest lecturer. We could also incorporate pollinator information into the Small Landowner Workshop Series.

Pollinator Garden Demonstration Area: The area could be used for field trips or workshops to demonstrate how pollinator conservation can be implemented at home. The district could develop a demonstration area located adjacent to the office, or further develop partnerships with private landowners, local agencies or organizations and schools.

Discussion held regarding pollinator populations, agriculture and possible partnerships. Dean Sirucek asked how big of an area is being proposed. Valerie noted that we are not that far along, we are just asking for feedback at this time. The board asked for further information. Hailey will further explore these options, interview people to find out what their issues are, what answers the district can provide, and bring that information back to the board. Hailey noted pollinators are not only bees.

**Furniture & Equipment Disposal:** Valerie Kurth explained NRCS has ordered new furniture, including conference room tables, which will be delivered the end of July. Staff proposed to dispose of old furniture pieces in the office and replace them with the current conference room tables. A Furniture & Equipment Disposal list was presented to the board. John Ellis motioned "to approve the Furniture and Equipment Disposal request to dispose of the peninsula stand, brown desk and table with brown top." Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Supervisor Recruitment:** There are three positions open for supervisor beginning 2019. Ronald Buentemeier and Verdell Jackson both filed paperwork with the County Election Department, leaving one position open. Valerie Kurth explained Ronald Buentemeier asked staff to look into how other districts recruit supervisors. Hailey Graf contacted several Area V conservation districts which provided the following information:

- 1) Utilize advertising and outreach. Some noted that a knowledge of the 310 process and hydraulic areas is preferred.
- 2) Current Supervisors train Associate Supervisors to help prepare them when submitting for an elected position.
- 3) Noted the importance of diversity in backgrounds being represented on district boards.



Valerie stated supervisors can also encourage interested individuals to attend a district meeting. Pete Woll stated Associate Supervisors can come join the board at any time and there is no limit to how many Associates a district may have. Ronald Buentemeier stated Flathead CD does not have a process or policy for filling supervisor positions, however it is important to have someone that will participate. Lori Curtis stated that outreach helps us let people know what we do and gives us a wider audience of people who might be interested. Hailey noted other districts attempt a balanced approach to make sure the position is filled. This will be placed on July business meeting agenda.

**End of Month Budget Report (May 2018):** Ginger Kauffman presented the End of Month Budget report for May 2018. Dean Sirucek motioned to approve the End of Month budget report for May.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

John Ellis asked for information on what is left in each account at year end for the past 5 years.

## **REPORTS**

**Flathead CD Staff:** Valerie Kurth and Hailey Graf reported:  
***District Office and Outreach***

1. Advertisements: 310 Permits (dock example), Aquatic Invasive Species
2. Valerie participated in the HB223 grant application presentation (via conference call). FCD’s application with the Montana Watershed Coordination Council for conservation district registration and travel scholarships received full funding. She also met with the planning team and is helping coordinate the Whitefish-area field trip.
3. Hailey attended the Flathead River Commission Meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup> and the UC3 meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup>.
4. Hailey met with Casey Lewis, with Kalispell Public Works, to discuss future partnership opportunities and expanding storm water and NPS pollution education in the Kalispell area.
5. Valerie, Hailey, and Pete Woll participated in a tour of Kalispell Creamery for attendees of the National Association of Conservation Districts regional meeting.
6. Valerie attended three trainings in June: Human Resources, Assistance for Business, and Local Government Year-End/Budget. Ginger Kauffman also attended the Local Government. *Valerie noted she would like make a few updates to the Personnel Policy, but overall we are doing well.*

## ***310-related***

Valerie participated in the 310 on-sites for FL2017053C (Boyd) and FL2017057C (Pheifer Trust) and FL2018022 (Motley). She and Hailey participated in on-sites for FL2017054C (Peura), FL2018023C (Jacobson), and FL2018026 (Wilson).

## ***On-the-Ground Projects***

**Trumbull Creek** – FCD received a letter of support from Flathead County Roads and Bridges to accompany our application to the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan program.





Cow Creek – Valerie and Samantha Tappenbeck arranged site visits with both property owners on Cow Creek to discuss the final project design. Subsequently, they met with the project manager and contract manager from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to review the contract and scope of work. They also brought the DEQ representatives to the project sites to see the creek and meet the landowners.

### ***Landowner Programs***

#### **Cost-Shares**

FY18 – Jessica Ressel helped Valerie conduct a post-harvest forest inventory at David Sibert's property to complete his thinning project.

FY19 – We received six new cost-share applications before the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Valerie scheduled and coordinated site visits with the landowners and supervisors. Dean Sirucek and Ronald Buentemeier both attended site visits with Valerie. One landowner subsequently withdrew their application. Valerie helped the others with any necessary budget adjustments.

Owen Sowerwine Natural Area – Valerie is coordinating with the Flathead County Weed Department to set up a memorandum of understanding and schedule herbicide application dates.

### ***Education and Outreach***

Rolling Rivers – Valerie, Hailey, and Pete took the Rolling Rivers Trailer to Hedges School on May 31<sup>st</sup> and presented to approximately 45 students. Hailey and Michael Barene (summer intern with NRCS) also presented the Rolling Rivers Trailer at the Creston Fish Hatchery to approximately 50 students, from kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Wings Across the Big Sky: Montana State Bird Festival – This conference was sponsored by the Flathead Audubon this year and took place in Kalispell June 8-10<sup>th</sup>. Hailey developed a display board and informational table for the event. The display featured information about the FCD, our programs, and successful partnerships for bird habitat conservation. Approximately 275 people attended the conference, many of whom were from Northwest Montana and the Flathead Valley.

EnviroScape Model – On May 29 and 30<sup>th</sup>, Hailey taught the EnviroScape program at the Flathead Lake Biological Station as part of the Flathead Lakers' Becoming Watershed Citizens educational event.

AIS Training for Outdoor Resource Educators – On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Hailey attended an aquatic invasive species training in Missoula. At this training she learned how to teach and lead 5 invasive species-related activities for a kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. She also received an educators' trunk with all the supplies to present the activities in class rooms or on field trips.

#### **Website/social media**

- Hailey developed a new blog series to help link the website and the Facebook page. This blog features weekly tips on do-it-yourself conservation. These blog posts have been well received and will hopefully continue to increase traffic to the website.



- Hailey wrote several new posts for our website and Facebook page on topics including available resources for teachers, conservation practices at local businesses, and backyard herbicide use.
- Website traffic was consistently about 20 users/day from May 25<sup>th</sup>-June 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the total number of users was 328 during that time period (86.6% were new viewers). Twenty-four page views resulted from Facebook post clicks.

Samantha Tappenbeck, Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM) reported: Attended the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission meeting (6/13)

- Status updates and proposed funding scenarios for AIS budget in 2019 biennium

Cow Creek Restoration Project 319 contract kickoff meeting and site visits (6/21)

Attended Drought Water Supply Advisory Committee meeting (6/20)

- Summary report for northwest Montana:

<http://swcdm.org/2018/06/20/nw-mt-report-from-dwsac-meeting>

TOMORROW! Riparian Grazing Workshop in Thompson Falls. Cost \$20 at the door.

SWCDM 2017 Annual Report

**Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS):** Jessica Ressel, NRCS, submitted the following report:

***Office Business***

- Environmental Qualities Incentives Program (EQIP) - working on another late funded application, high tunnel. Funds will then be depleted for the state of Montana. Flathead County received about \$305,000.00 for forestry, livestock and cropping land uses.
- Working on a compatible use agreement for one of the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) easements. Grazing will begin mid-July.
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) renewal is in progress, there are 4 renewals (2014 Contracts). Contracting for this renewal period will be completed by November 2018.
- Field season is beginning for all practice certifications of active contracts, and new EQIP and CSP inventories.
- Application deadline for EQIP was June 1, 2018. As of now, there are currently 13 new applications, land uses include forestry, cropland and pasture.
- Continual work on thinning projects, and field work pertaining to EQIP/CSP/WRP contracts.





### ***Contracts***

- 55 active contracts

EQIP- 28 active EQIP contracts. Land uses include: Forestland/Pre commercial thinning, Ag land/high tunnels.

CSP- 12 active CSP contracts; 6 of them in their last year. CSP's in last year of contract will be offered an opportunity to re-new their contracts, of the 6, 4 will be renewing.

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) - 15 easements; of those 4 of them are 30 year easements. A continued use agreement for grazing will need to be updated this year for one of the WRP contracts, this will require a grazing plan to be implemented.

### ***Administrative***

The District Conservationist (DC) position for Kalispell was advertised May 25<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup> and was only advertised internally for other government employees to apply for. Someone should be hired by August or September of this year. Jessica Ressel will be acting DC and will be point of contact for Kalispell NRCS office until mid-September. Office workload will be managed between Jessica, Roger and Mindy (Area Conservationist).

**Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD):** Pete Woll reported MACD has selected Dan McGowan as the new Director, every MACD board member is now also serving on a committee, dues issues continue, MACD convention will be held in Billings this fall, and the NACD 2017 annual report is available.

**Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB):** Dean Sirucek reported the meeting included two zone changes. The next meeting is July 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB):** John Ellis reported three items were on the agenda: accessory apartments, Muldown Elementary School, which passed, and the revised version of the development plan for the First Baptist Church property, which received a split vote. The next meeting is July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3):** Lori Curtis reported the June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting included information gathering, standard updates, grant and funding discussions.

**Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC):** No report.

**Flathead Basin Commission (FBC):** Dean Sirucek reported the meeting included restructuring, review of by-laws, and strategic planning for the next several years. Dean stated FBC is stepping back from AIS, but will help UC3. He noted the primary focus for FBC will be water quality issues as well as facilitating wrapping up the TMDL, dealing with significant natural resource problems (i.e. train spills), re-focusing and downsizing.



**Flathead River Commission (FRC):** No report.

**Clark Fork & Kootenai River Basins Council (CFKRBC):** No report.

**MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF**

- Adopted Rules updates: Any recommended changes/suggestions are to be brought to the July business meeting. Lori Curtis and Valerie Kurth will then compile proposed changes.
- Watershed Symposium Grant 23G-18-3598: Valerie Kurth explained the contract was received from DNRC today and has to be signed and returned right away. A phone poll was taken. This will be on the 310-meeting agenda.
- Supervisor Summit: To be held August 29-30 in Helena. Valerie Kurth asked supervisors to contact her if they are interested in attending.

The next 310-Stream Permit meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 9, 2018, 7:00 P.M. in the conference room of the USDA building at 133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT.

Adjournment: Pete Woll motioned “to adjourn.” Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman  
Administrator

Valerie Kurth, Ph.D.  
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>7/9/2018</u>	<u>Ronald Buentemeier</u>	<u>Chair</u>
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)

